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The Importance of Truth, and the Duty of making an open Profession of it:

REPRESENTED IN A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED ON

WEDNESDAY the 28th of APRIL, 1790,

AT THE

MEETING-HOUSE IN THE OLD-JEWRY, LONDON;

TO THE SUPPORTERS OF THE

NEW COLLEGE AT HACKNEY.

BY THOMAS BELSHAM.

RARA TEMPORUM FELICITAS, UBI
SENTIRE QUÆ VELIS, ET QUÆ SENTIAS DICERE LICET.
TACITUS.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY H. GOLDNEY,
FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD; T. CADELL,
IN THE STRAND, AND C. DILLY, IN THE POULTRY.

M. DCC. XC.

Rec'd March 28, 1945

Gift of Hon. S. A. Eliot

of Boston

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SERMON, &c.

JOHN xviii. 37.

Jeſus anſwered, to this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the world, that I ſhould bear witneſs unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

THAT truth is ſacred and inviolable is a firſt principle in morals: and no object of education is of greater importance than to form the mind early to a high ſenſe of true honour, to inculcate a ſupreme love of truth, and an habitual regard to it, to excite an ardent thirſt after it, impartiality, and unremitting diligence in the inveſtigation of it, courage in profeſſing it, firmneſs, and fortitude in adhering to it. The Son of God tells us that to bear witneſs to truth

was the chief end of his birth and miſſion into the world. Many of the greateſt and wiſeſt of men have thought life well employed in ſearching after truth, and not a few have ventured to ſacrifice all that was valuable in life to a public profeſſion of principles which they have deemed uſeful to mankind, and ſome have even ſealed their teſtimony with their blood.

It is natural therefore to enquire whence truth derives her dignity and value? What rewards does ſhe hold out to the votaries of whom ſhe requires ſo hard a ſervice, and ſo coſtly a ſacrifice? What benefits do they obtain who ſpend their lives in the purſuit of truth? What compenſation do they receive who voluntarily expoſe themſelves to loſs, to violence, and *what is far worſe to bear*, to ſcorn and contumely rather than deſert her ſacred ſtandard?

To the thoughtleſs multitude ſuch conduct appears as the extreme of folly. The philoſopher forgetting his food while he is employed in the inveſtigation of ſublime and abſtract theorems; the mathematician

thematician requeſting the indulgence of his murderer only till his demonſtration is concluded; the confeſſor who voluntarily renounces eaſe and opulence, and dignity, that he may devote himſelf to the propagation of truth; and the martyr who with joy embraces the ſtake rather than renounce his principles, are equally the objects of ſtupid wonder, or of contemptuous reproach.

That the vicious who are enemies to truth, that the gay and giddy who never think at all, that the man of avarice and thrift, whoſe ideas reach no farther than his bags of gold, that the indolent man who will not take the neceſſary pains, that the timorous who are afraid of the conſequences of free and honeſt enquiry, and of the explicit avowal of their convictions, that *theſe* ſhould be hoſtile to the humble, the patient, the reſolute enquirer after truth, the firm and intrepid defender of it, and that *they* ſhould treat his conduct with diſdain is not at all ſurprizing: from ſuch characters this may naturally be expected. But that *philoſophers* ſhould ever join in the general cry, that

that men who have themſelves been the faithful, zealous, ſucceſsful votaries of truth, ſhould throw obſtacles into the way of thoſe who are following their footſteps, that like the ignorant vulgar *they* ſhould treat each others enquiries with contempt, without conſidering that all truths have a neceſſary connexion with each other, and that each is uſeful in its place; *this* is indeed truly ſurprizing, and wherever it occurs it is a ſignal inſtance of the weakneſs of the human underſtanding, and of the limitation of its views.

And how frequently ſuch inſtances do occur daily obſervation will teach us. Not only do perſons who in various ways aſpire to literary eminence, often affect a pedantic contempt of thoſe branches of ſcience which they have never ſtudied, and which they do not underſtand, but even philoſophic Chriſtians, for chriſtianity is the trueſt and ſublimeſt philoſophy, I ſay even philoſophic chriſtians themſelves, who by patient and laborious enquiry have emancipated themſelves from vulgar prejudices, and have diſcovered, em-

embraced, and profeſſed the pure and ſimple doctrine of the goſpel, even theſe are often heard to maintain that ſincerity is every thing, that nothing is of much value but an honeſt heart, and that ſpeculative opinions, the cant name for thoſe intereſting doctrines which the wiſe and good in every age have thought worthy the moſt ſerious diſcuſſion, that theſe ſpeculative opinions, as they are opprobriouſly called, are of little uſe. What is this but to paſs a ſevere cenſure upon thoſe illuſtrious names whoſe acute and learned labours have been ſucceſsfully employed in clearing up the difficulties in which theſe important ſubjects were involved, to condemn their own conduct in waſting ſo much of their time and pains upon ſuch uſeleſs ſpeculations, and to check the progreſs of religious enquiry and chriſtian knowledge.

Were I a friend to the popular maxim, that ſpeculative opinions are of no importance, I would at leaſt endeavour to act conſiſtently with my principles, I would content myſelf with believing as my fathers believed, I would take no pains to

acquire or to diffuſe knowledge, I would laugh at every attempt to inſtruct and to meliorate the world, I would treat as a viſionary and a fool every one who ſhould aim to extend the limits of ſcience, I would recommend to my fellow creatures that they ſhould neither lye nor defraud, that they ſhould neither ſwear falſely nor ſteal, and that they ſhould ſay their prayers as they have been taught, but as to any thing elſe that they need give themſelves no concern, for that honeſty was every thing, and that every expectation of improving their circumſtances, by cultivating their underſtandings, and extending their views, would prove deluſive and chimerical.

But was this the language held by Bacon and Boyle, by Locke and Newton, by Clarke and Hartley, names which will be dear to ſcience and to virtue as long as the world endures? Was this the manner in which *they* thought and reaſoned, and acted? Did *they* fancy that ignorant well meaning honeſty was all that was neceſſary to *their* character and uſefulneſs? What then would have become of

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all thoſe ſublime ſpeculations which have aſtoniſhed and illuminated the world, and which have introduced a new æra of knowledge, liberty, and happineſs into human affairs? Happily for mankind, happily for ourſelves in particular, theſe illuſtrious characters valued truth and ſcience more than the good opinion of their contemporaries, and deſpiſing the ſneer of fools, and the clamour of bigots, they reſolutely devoted their time and labour to enquiries which their comprehenſive underſtandings clearly diſcerned to be conducive to the inſtruction and improvement of mankind, though deemed by the great and the little vulgar of the age in which they lived to be at beſt trifling and viſionary, if not pernicious ſpeculations. We who enjoy the benefit of that reſplendent light which their admired and immortal writings have diffuſed over the philoſophical, the political and the moral world, ſee the errors of our forefathers, we revere theſe heroes of ſcience, theſe champions of truth, of liberty and virtue, as the beſt friends and benefactors of mankind, we are proud of calling them our countrymen, and

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the lateſt poſterity, will pronounce their names with veneration and gratitude.

Here then we return to the queſtion with which we ſet out: What is Truth, and what is that which gives truth its dignity, and ſtamps its value? What is that which juſtifies the wiſe and good in devoting their lives to the purſuit of it, and in profeſſing it, and adhering to it at the hazard, and in ſome circumſtances the certain loſs of all that men uſually eſteem moſt intereſting and valuable? It is not to be ſuppoſed that men of inquiſitive minds are differently conſtituted from other men, nor are they inſenſible to the comforts of life. Eaſe and affluence, and reputation, and liberty, ſocial pleaſures, domeſtic comforts, and the good opinion of thoſe with whom they uſually converſe, are as dear to them as they are to others, nor can it be imagined that they would in any circumſtances, or upon any occaſion ſacrifice theſe valuable objects to the intereſt of truth and ſcience, without what to them at leaſt appeared ſome weighty and cogent reaſon.

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And I will venture to aſſert, that they are not miſtaken in their general principle; for if we conſider the ſubject it will clearly appear that truth is an object of ineſtimable value; nor will it be difficult to prove that it is the indiſpenſable duty of all, as far as ability and opportunity permit, to *bear teſtimony to it* by diligent enquiry after it, courageous profeſſion of it, faithful adherence to it, and by uſing every fair and honourable means of promoting its progreſs in the world.

But if this can be ſatisfactorily proved, little need be added to recommend to your patronage an Inſtitution, the avowed object of which is to promote unlimited freedom of enquiry, and to ſupply the beſt means for the inveſtigation of intereſting and uſeful truth, and which neither merits nor aſks your continued ſupport any farther than as it continues to be ſubſervient to the cauſe of learning and of virtue.

TRUTH is a word of various import. It is ſometimes uſed to expreſs the real exiſtence, properties, powers, connexions, and relations of things—it more frequent-

ly ſignifies the conformity of our ideas to the reality of things, or the conformity of our words to our ideas, of our declarations to our purpoſes, and of our actions to our promiſes. In the former of theſe more uſual ſenſes of the word, Truth is nearly ſynonymous to knowledge, in the latter it is a moral virtue of great importance and univerſal obligation.

The very definition of Truth demonſtrates its ineſtimable value. For happineſs is the great end of intellectual exiſtence; and it is obvious that Truth is the only ſafe guide to happineſs.

The choice of the end is determined by the conſtitution of our nature. An intelligent being cannot chuſe evil for its own ſake: It is ignorance and error only which miſlead us in the purſuit of happineſs. Properly ſpeaking, vice itſelf originates in error. It is the purſuit of happineſs by wrong means; it is the choice of evil under the ſemblance of good. The virtuous man purſues happineſs by means which lead directly to the end—the vicious man follows the ſame object, but in a way which leads him wide from his mark;

mark; and deluded by the ignis fatuus of his prejudices and paſſions, he wanders on till he plunges unawares into the gulph of ruin, unleſs previouſly reclaimed by painful experience, and ſalutary diſcipline, to the path of wiſdom and of peace.

The truths which are moſt intereſting to the human mind, and moſt intimately connected with our happineſs, are chiefly either *philoſophical*, *political* or *theological:* and upon theſe ſubjects right apprehenſions are of the utmoſt importance both to individuals and to communities.

The proper department of *philoſophy* is *body* and *mind:* the phænomena both of the external and of the intellectual world: and the acquiſition of Truth in each of theſe particulars tends to improve the human character, and to meliorate the ſtate of the world.

When philoſophy extends her views over the magnificent creation, when ſhe contemplates the immenſity of the works of God, when ſhe obſerves the beautiful order and harmony which reign through

the univerſe, when ſhe remarks the ſimplicity of the laws which regulate the motions of the celeſtial ſpheres, and ſees how admirably every thing is adapted to the convenience and uſe of intelligent inhabitants, ſhe elevates and expands the heart, and inſpires the moſt awful and adoring ſentiments of that glorious Being, the word of whoſe power called the univerſe into exiſtence, whoſe all pervading energy ſuſtains and actuates the vaſt machine, and who created a countleſs multitude of percipient and intelligent beings for no other purpoſe, than to diſplay his benevolence, and to make them happy.

Nor is philoſophy uſeleſs when ſhe limits her views to the phænomena of this habitable world. It has been well obſerved that knowledge is power. Philoſophy teaches us the properties of thoſe ſubſtances with which we are more immediately converſant, and enables us to combine and to apply them in ſuch a manner as to ſave an immenſe expence of human and animal labour, to increaſe the productions of the earth, to facilitate the intercourſes of ſociety, to diffuſe the bleſſings of commerce,

merce, to avert ſome of the moſt formidable calamities to which the perſons and the works of men are expoſed, to alleviate diſeaſe and pain, and by diminiſhing the expence, and multiplying the produce of labour, to bring the comforts of life within the reach of perſons in humble ſtations. And ſuch is the rapid and continually accelerated melioration of the ſtate of mankind in conſequence of the attention now paid to philoſophical enquiries, and the new diſcoveries which are every day opening upon us, that the human imagination can hardly ſet limits to the progreſs of human improvement, and there can be no reaſonable doubt that future generations will excel the preſent in ſcience, and in the arts which improve and embelliſh human life, as far as the preſent enlightened æra excels the darkeſt period of Gothic ignorance. And there ſeems to be a plauſible preſumption in favour of that pleaſing hypotheſis which ſome benevolent ſpeculatiſts have advanced, that the earth may in proceſs of time revert to its original paradiſiacal ſtate, and that as the comforts of human life will be multiplied, and its evils diminiſhed, the limits of it will be proportionably

onably extended, ſo that they have even ventured to expreſs ſome faint expectation that death itſelf may be annihilated. Nor would it be very difficult to ſhew, if this were a proper time and place, that the ſcriptures themſelves are not unfavourable to this amiable ſpeculation *.

May I venture to add there is another philoſophy hitherto perhaps too little explored, and for that reaſon only, too much undervalued, but which is in truth of more intrinſic importance than that which I have already mentioned. It is that philoſophy which the ſagacity of Locke firſt reſcued from darkneſs and barbariſm, which the comprehenſive genius of Hartley has exhibited in open day; and which the ingenious labours of ſucceeding philoſophers of the greateſt name have placed within the reach of ordinary capacities; it is the *philoſophy of mind*. It is that philoſophy

* See Worthington on the Extent of Redemption, and Biſhop Lowth's Notes upon Iſaiah lxv. 17. and following verſes. Some ingenious critics have thought that St. Paul's expreſſions, Rom. viii. 19—22. and the doctrine of the Millenium, and the new Jeruſalem in the book of Revelation, may be beſt interpreted of the reſtoration of the world to a paradiſiacal ſtate.

philoſophy which inveſtigates the phænomena of the ſentient principle in the human breaſt, which teaches man to know himſelf, to form a juſt eſtimate of the dignity of his nature, of his high and happy deſtination, to number and to meaſure his intellectual powers, to calculate their ſtrength, to direct their exertions, and to carry them to the higheſt ſtate of poſſible improvement—which opens to view the hidden ſources of knowledge, which teaches to analyſe the moſt complex feelings of the mind, to trace the origin and progreſs of affection, habit, and character, which reveals the ſubtle movements of the intellectual machine, the laws which it obeys, and thoſe ſecret ſprings which with invariable certainty regulate all its motions; and which, if ſkilfully touched, will, as by an irreſiſtible charm, produce the regular harmonious movement of the whole, and carry it on in a ſteady and unerring courſe to virtue, to honour, to ultimate, complete, interminable happineſs. Upon ſubjects like theſe, it will ſurely be admitted, that right views are of great importance. The philoſophers who have thought them worthy of

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their attention have univerſally found them ſo. Nor can this intereſting ſcience be deſpiſed by any but thoſe who having paid no attention to the ſubject, are incompetent to form a judgement of it; and whoſe contempt therefore is as little worthy of regard, as the abſurd ſcoffs of infidels who reject and inſult revelation without having enquired into its evidence *.

The great value of *political truth* is ſo very obvious, that none will pretend to call it in queſtion, who recollects that the hiſtory of all countries is little more than the hiſtory of thoſe calamities which have been brought on by political errors; and that the preſent comparatively happy condition of the world, the improved ſtate of civil ſociety, and the rapid and aſtoniſhing progreſs of liberty and national happineſs, is chiefly owing to the progreſs of Truth, and to the gradual extenſion of juſt principles concerning the natural

* See an able Defence of the Philoſophy of the human Mind, againſt the futile attack of a popular Writer, in Eſſays, philoſophical, hiſtorical and literary. No. x.

tural rights of mankind, and of the ends for which civil communities are formed.

Who can enumerate the baneful conſequences which have accrued to mankind from thoſe wretched principles which were ſo faſhionable in this country in the laſt century, and which will ever be the favorite maxims of deſpotic governments, that kings are appointed by God; that they have a divine right to the authority with which they are inveſted; that they are amenable to no human tribunal; that government is intended for the honor and advantage of the governors not of the governed; that power conſtitutes right; that ambition and the luſt of dominion is a ſufficient reaſon for going to war; that the blood and treaſure of the community is to be laviſhed whenever a capricious tyrant quarrels with his neighbour upon ſome trifling occaſion in which he thinks the idle phantom which he calls his glory intereſted*; that ſubjects,

* The only reaſon aſſigned by Lewis XIV. for entering upon the war of 1672, which threatened the deſtruction of Holland and the total overthrow of civil

however oppreſſed are in no caſe, and upon no occaſion to reſiſt, but that if they cannot in conſcience obey the civil power, they muſt tamely ſubmit to whatever puniſhment an arbitrary tyrant may inflict: that the magiſtrate has a right to chuſe a religion for his ſubjects: to ſupport this religion, however abſurd and unſcriptural, by pains and penalties, and civil diſqualifications; and even to deſtroy the bodies of loyal and uſeful ſubjects conſcientiouſly diſſenting from the eſtabliſhed creed, under the vain and inſolent pretence of ſaving their ſouls.

Thank God theſe impious and execrable principles, which debaſe the human character, and degrade men to a level with the brutes, are now very generally reprobated. The light of truth dawns, the ſhadows of the night withdraw—and the horrid forms of deſpotiſm, and tyranny which like

civil liberty, and the proteſtant cauſe in Europe, was that his *glory* would not permit him any longer to put up with the conduct of the States.——The chief oſtenſible reaſon of Charles II. was, that they had *expoſed* abuſive pictures, and falſe hiſtorical medals and pillars. Phenix, vol. i. p. 284.

like the wild beaſts of the foreſt, have ſo long harraſſed and terrified mankind, and deluged the world with blood, retire ſullenly to their dens. Theſe juſt and ineſtimable principles, which ought to be deeply engraven on every human heart, that every man is born free; that the people are the origin of power; that civil ſociety is an expedient deviſed for the protection of the liberty, property, and perſons of the ſeveral members of the community; that the powers which be, are no farther ordained of God than as they are ſubſervient to the public good; that every abridgment of natural liberty which is not neceſſary to ſecure the ends of civil ſociety is injuſtice and oppreſſion; that magiſtrates are the ſervants and ſtewards of the people, accountable to them for their conduct, and liable to be removed or puniſhed if they abuſe their truſt; that ſelf-defence is the only juſt ground for war; that civil government has no more concern with the different ſyſtems of religion, the object of which is totally foreign from the province of the magiſtrate, than it has with different theories of philoſophy or medicine; and

that every diſability, every civil inconvenience on a religious account is abſurd and unjuſt, and falls as properly under the definition of perſecution as corporal ſeverities, though not in an equal degree; theſe principles, the truth and importance of which are becoming every day more apparent and more univerſally acknowledged, reſtore men to their rights and dignity as rational creatures, and in proportion as they prevail they will overturn every ſyſtem of civil and eccleſiaſtical tyranny, and will diffuſe liberty and happineſs through the world.

It is to theſe principles firſt underſtood and adopted in theſe fortunate iſlands, that Great Britain ſtands indebted for that free and equal conſtitution which has till very lately given her an enviable pre-eminence over all the nations of the world; and for the exchange of the tyranny of the Stuarts for the mild adminiſtration of the Houſe of Brunſwick. Had theſe principles been well underſtood and purſued to their juſt conſequences, a late application to the legiſlature for relief would have met with a very different

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fate; and a reſpectable claſs of loyal ſubjects would not have had reaſon to complain, that without the leaſt imputation of a civil offence they remain degraded from the rights of citizens. And it is their firm conviction of the truth and of the growing influence of theſe principles which encourage both the proteſtant and the catholic diſſenter to took forward with pleaſing expectation to an æra, which in theſe enlightened times cannot be far diſtant, in which truth and reaſon ſhall prevail over the clamours of bigotry and prejudice, when difference in religious opinions ſhall create no difference in the condition of citizens equally entitled to ſhare in the privileges and honours of the ſtate; and when even the phraſe *religious toleration* ſhall, as implying a groundleſs reflection upon perſons who differ from us in theological ſpeculations, be diſcarded as a ſoleciſm in language.

Theſe are the principles which have ſpread the bleſſings of civil and religious liberty acroſs the Atlantic; and it is the ſecret, gradual, irreſiſtible influence of truth, which has undermined the fabric of

of deſpotiſm in a neighbouring country, and has accompliſhed a revolution there unparalleled in the hiſtory of nation; a revolution which has aſtoniſhed the world; which like the portentous characters on the walls of Belſhazzar's palace, ſtrikes terror into the hearts of tyrants, and cauſes the fawning croud of ſycophants to ſtand aghaſt; but which fills the breaſt of every true friend to the liberties and rights of mankind with generous exultation, and opens a glorious proſpect to the benevolent and reflecting mind.

The utility of *philoſophical* and *political* truth, it is preſumed that no one will diſpute. They are of great importance to men, as the rational inhabitants of this world, and as members of civil ſociety. But I will venture to add, though I do not expect univerſal acquieſcence in the doctrine, that to men as individuals, right apprehenſions of *moral* and *religious* truth, are of much greater importance than either.

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The general principle indeed will be readily allowed. If man be intended for future exiſtence, and if it be the object of religion to teach us how to attain final happineſs, it cannot be denied that juſt views of religious truth are of the utmoſt conſequence.

The eſſentials of religion may be expreſſed in very few terms. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyſelf. But theſe propoſitions, ſimple as they may appear, comprehend a variety of articles, concerning which mankind are more or leſs prone to fall into error.

That errors upon religious ſubjects may be of the moſt pernicious practical conſequence, and that right ſentiments of God and duty are of great importance, muſt be admitted by all who profeſs chriſtianity, and who believe that Chriſt came into the world to bear witneſs to the truth, and to rectify thoſe errors concerning religion which had reduced mankind

kind to the moſt deplorable ſtate of impiety and immorality.

The chriſtian doctrine is ſo ſimple and intelligible in itſelf, and ſo plainly taught in the New Teſtament, that if we could read the ſcriptures with unprejudiced minds, and with a little attention to its peculiar phraſeology, it ſeems next to impoſſible to miſtake the meaning of the ſacred writers.

And yet experience teaches us, that an immenſe maſs of corruptions has attached itſelf to the plain and ſimple doctrine of Chriſt, ſo that genuine chriſtianity is almoſt loſt amidſt the vaſt multitude of adventitious principles; and for perſons whoſe early prejudices are all favourable to theſe enormous errors, it requires no ſmall degree of attention, together with ſome little ſtrength of mind, to emancipate themſelves, and to read the ſcriptures with underſtanding.

And we are often told, that it is to no purpoſe to attempt it: that all chriſtians hold whatever is eſſential: and that as to

ſpeculative

ſpeculative opinions, the leſs we trouble ourſelves about them the better. This is doctrine avowed by many who paſs in the world for moderate, candid, and wiſe. But it behoves them well to conſider, whether religious indifference, whether ignorance and indolence, whether dread of the conſequences of free and impartial enquiry, whether love of eaſe, and love of the world, do not conceal themſelves under theſe ſpecious and reſpectable names.

For no principle can be more abſurd than this—that ſpeculative errors are of little conſequence. A man's views and principles have a neceſſary influence upon his volitions; volitions produce actions, actions generate habits, habits conſtitute character, and upon character the ſtate of man, his honour and uſefulneſs, his preſent peace, and final happineſs depend. If the tree be good, the fruit alſo will be good; if the tree be corrupt, the fruit will be corrupt. From good principles, good actions—valuable habits—and virtuous characters naturally take riſe;—from erroneous principles the reverſe: and error, in proportion as it prevails, will debaſe the character. It is in vain to

ſay—that honeſty, poor ſimple honeſty, will atone for every defect:—there is ſuch a thing as dignity and ſublimity of character, the reſult of juſt and comprehenſive views, after which every generous mind will aſpire, and which mere honeſty can never attain. Away then, with the groveling and pernicious maxim, a maxim which chills every exalted feeling, which fetters every active faculty, which damps every great exertion of the ſoul, that honeſty is the only thing needful, and that it is not worth our trouble to correct our religious, that is, our moſt injurious prejudices.

If this wretched maxim be true, what egregious folly were the Luthers, and Cranmers, and Clarkes, the inſtructors and reformers of mankind in earlier and later ages, chargeable with, who devoted their lives to the inveſtigation of religious truth; who at all hazards oppoſe popular and eſtabliſhed errors, and boldly avowed, defended, and taught what they judged to be the genuine principles of chriſtianity. Venerable names! ſacred to truth and virtue! may no unhallowed hand

hand rob you of thoſe honours which you have ſo well deſerved, and ſo dearly purchaſed. Be it my ambition to be enrolled with the meaneſt of thoſe who adhere to your deſerted ſtandard; and in the cauſe of religious truth, which I firmly believe to be inſeparably connected with the practice of virtue, and the attainment of human happineſs; may I ever eſteem it the higheſt honour to be accounted worthy to bear reproach and to ſuffer loſs.

The principle that ſpeculative errors are of little conſequence, is indeed ſo flagrantly abſurd, that when exemplified in detail no one chuſes to avow it. Speculative error has led men to worſhip the Virgin Mary, to idolize ſaints, to deify a piece of bread, to ſubſtitute maſſes, penances, pilgrimages, and gifts, to lazy and knaviſh eccleſiaſtics, in the room of moral virtues, and even to perſecute to impriſonment, torture and death, many of the worthieſt profeſſors of chriſtianity, in the fooliſh preſumption of glorifying and ſerving God.

But we are told, that though the errors of popery are pernicious and dangerous, yet that proteſtants all agree in fundamental doctrines; and therefore, that it is idle trifling to waſte time in diſcuſſing queſtions acknowledged to be indifferent. But is it a queſtion of no conſequence, my brethren, whether we are to worſhip one God, even the Father, or to pay diſtinct and equal homage to three diſtinct infinite ſpirits *? Whether we are to receive Jeſus of Nazareth as a *man* approved of God by miracles, and wonders, and ſigns †, which God did by him; or whether we are to believe in him as God equal with the Father, and entitled to the ſame divine honours, or as a ſtrange compound of finite and infinite, created and uncreated ſubſtance, intelligence and power, perfect God and perfect man, united and blended in one individual perſon? Is it a matter of no conſequence whether we conceive of all mankind as doomed

* "To ſay there are three divine perſons, and not three diſtinct infinite minds, is both hereſy and nonſenſe." Sherlock's Vind p. 105. Ben Mordecai's Apol. vol. i. p. 69.

† Acts ii. 22.

doomed to eternal miſery for the ſin of Adam, or believe that every man ſhall receive the proper puniſhment of his own tranſgreſſions alone? Is it a queſtion of trifling ſpeculation merely, whether God forgives ſins from motives of infinite mercy without any foreign conſideration, or whether he pardons the penitent only after a full compenſation made by a Being of equal dignity with himſelf?

Theſe ſurely are ſubjects worthy of ſerious enquiry: nor are thoſe great and ſagacious men to be condemned who have employed their learning and abilities in accurately diſcuſſing them, and in bringing them to a fair iſſue.

But we are told, that there are good men of all perſuaſions——I grant it with pleaſure. There are influences which may check the impious and immoral tendency of popery; and there are principles which counteract the gloomy errors of calviniſm. Many of the beſt and moſt exalted characters with which I have had the honour to converſe, and ſome to whoſe wiſe and pious, and benevolent attentions, I owe obligations

obligations which can never be repaid, have been firm believers in this unamiable and melancholy ſyſtem. Native goodneſs of heart, the beauty, order and happineſs which prevail in the world, and the whole ſtrain and tenor of the New Teſtament, which uniformly teaches that God is love, all contradict and abate the influence of that terrible doctrine, that *all mankind are by the fall brought into* and left to periſh in a *ſtate of ſin and miſery*, excepting the happy few whom *God has out of his mere good pleaſure, elected to everlaſting life* *. But ſo far as ſuch principles are believed, and practically regarded, they naturally tend to contract the heart, to ſour the temper, to inſpire dread and hatred of God, and to diſquiet the mind with the moſt formidable and diſtreſſing apprehenſions. They, and there are many ſuch, who are ſincerely pious, and diffuſively benevolent with theſe principles, could not have failed to have been much better, and much happier, had they adopted a milder, a more rational, a more truly evangelical creed.

Shall

* Aſſembly's Catechiſm.

Shall we ſay then, that all who embrace juſt and ſcriptural principles of religion, excel the reſt of mankind in piety and virtue? I am ſure that they ought; and I am happy to add, that there are ſome characters which tower above the common level, whoſe excellence bears a uniform proportion to the excellence of the principles upon which they are formed; and who exhibit to the world a ſtriking example of that dignity and ſublimity to which truth and virtue are capable of elevating the human mind. O that ſuch examples were more frequent. But as the wiſdom and goodneſs of Providence has placed men within the reach of influences, which in ſome degree counteract the natural effects of pernicious errors: ſo there are likewiſe contagions which may taint and vitiate the heart, which is in a conſiderable degree emancipated from the yoke of prejudice. And as in machines, unperceived obſtructions will often diminiſh the effect which an accurate calculation of their powers would lead us to expect; ſo there are ſometimes hidden cauſes which obſtruct the influence of

received

received principles in the mind; and it ſeldom happens that men are either ſo virtuous or ſo vicious as their ſpeculative views would render them, if purſued to their juſt conſequences.

Rational chriſtians indeed are often repreſented as indifferent to practical religion. But not now to obſerve, that the perſons who advance this charge are commonly ſuch as have the leaſt acquaintance with chriſtians of this deſcription, and to ſay nothing of the wrong judgements which they may have formed concerning the nature of religion, of the undue ſtreſs which they often lay upon appearances, and inſtrumental duties, nor of the indecency of confining all goodneſs wholly or chiefly to perſons of their own perſuaſion; it may perhaps be admitted, that there has been ſome plauſible ground for the accuſation. The men who are moſt indifferent to the practice of religion, and whoſe minds therefore are leaſt attached to any ſet of principles, will ever be the firſt to ſee the abſurdities of a popular ſuperſtition, and to embrace a rational ſyſtem of faith. But not being

being properly influenced by it, their irregular conduct will for a time diſgrace their principles. But truth will gradually make its way by its native energy, and will in the end riſe ſuperior to every prejudice. Practical believers will at length open their eyes, and feeling the benign influence of juſt and generous principles, they will demonſtrate the excellence of their faith by the ſuperior dignity and worth of their character.

There are none who ſet a higher value upon truth, and none who are ſo well qualified to judge of its comparative excellence, as the perſons who have been the practical diſciples of error. Let thoſe then whoſe minds have been perplexed concerning the proper object of religious worſhip, who have been anxious to pay to each of three ſuppoſed divine perſons the homage due to them, but doubtful how to regulate their addreſſes, and fearful of offending one by undue attention to another: let thoſe whoſe feelings have dictated what they dare not avow, nor even think that they have felt, that

the formidable chimera of their imaginations, to which they have annexed the name of God the Father, was a mercileſs tyrant, who have believed that he treated his intelligent offspring as no kind human parent would have treated his children, nor any juſt and good governour his ſubjects;—who were ſecretly wiſhing, though they dare dot believe that they wiſhed, that the reins of univerſal government were in better hands;—who, with aching hearts, have viewed an omnipotent God, marking with a jealous and inexorable eye, every inſtance of human frailty and folly;—who have been haraſſed with diſtreſſing doubts whether they were in the number of the choſen few, or doomed to eternal miſery by an irreſiſtible, and arbitrary decree for the ſin of another; let ſuch (and ſome who now hear me, know, that I am not deſcribing a fictitious character) declare, the ſatisfaction they felt when brought out of this darkneſs into marvellous light, when reſcued from this more than Egyptian bondage, into a new and glorious liberty; when, by the bleſſing of God upon their religious enquiries, they were

were led to form juſt ſentiments of religion, to entertain a firm conviction of the abſolute unity of God; of his conſummate wiſdom, of his boundleſs goodneſs, of the equity of his government, of the reaſonableneſs of his law, and of his indulgent regard to the frail and erring children of men; let them declare which of theſe two oppoſite ſyſtems has the moſt direct tendency to animate, to chear, and to purify the heart, to inſpire confidence in God, and benevolence to man, to make obedience a pleaſure, to pour balm into the wounded ſpirit, and to diffuſe a pleaſing tranquillity over the mind incapable of being diſcompoſed by the ſtorms of life: and let them ſay, whether the acquiſition and profeſſion of theſe juſt and elevating ſentiments be not well worth any labour, or any ſacrifice which they may coſt; and whether they do not naturally raiſe the generous wiſh that all who are acquainted with the goſpel may entertain the ſame rational and amiable views of its divine doctrine, and may unite with one accord in aſcribing glory to God in the higheſt, becauſe

there is peace on earth, and good will to men.

Such then is truth, and ſuch its high dignity, its ineſtimable value. It is truth that enlightens the world; it is truth that multiplies the bleſſings of life, and is daily opening new ſources of human happineſs; it is truth which teaches men to aſſert their native freedom, which breaks the fetters of deſpotiſm and oppreſſion, and diffuſes through the world liberty, ſecurity, and peace; it is truth which elevates and ſtrengthens the mind, which forms men to the love and practice of virtue, which ſpeaks comfort to the heart under the ſorrows of life, which baniſhes the fear of death, and which exalts men to immortal felicity.

Can we then wonder that the wiſe and good in every age have ſet the higheſt value upon truth, and have ſought after it with the greateſt avidity? Can we wonder that philoſophers have devoted their time and labour to the inveſtigation of it? Can we wonder that confeſſors and martyrs have ſacrificed every thing

to

to the profeſſion of it, and have even laid down their lives in its defence? Can we wonder that the Son of God was ſent into the world to bear teſtimony to it?

Upon the latter part of the ſubject, the *duties* reſulting from this view of the excellence and importance of truth, I ſhall now add a few brief hints; it would be ſuperfluous to enlarge.

Firſt, It is the duty of all to ſeek after truth with diligence, with patience, with impartiality, with perſeverance as far as ability and opportunity permit, becauſe it is the duty of all to be virtuous and happy; and truth is the beſt means of attaining theſe important ends.

But is truth itſelf attainable? Undoubtedly; in a degree. It is not to be imagined that God has imparted to men faculties which when properly exerciſed are incapable of diſtinguiſhing between truth and error. There have been ſome who with unwearied induſtry have ſought after and diſcovered truth; not indeed completely;

completely; that is not to be expected: but they have diſtinguiſhed themſelves above their contemporaries, by the ardour and the ſucceſs of their enquiries; and their labours have laid a foundation for ſucceeding improvements. Many are now engaged in the ſame honourable purſuit; and it is by patient and diligent enquiry, by fair, candid, and liberal diſcuſſion, that truth muſt finally make its way.

But it is obſerved, that all parties are equally confident that they are in poſſeſſion of truth. Hence indolence and timidity take occaſion to exclaim that all enquiry is vain, for truth is not to be found.

But the language of upright and laudable curioſity is widely different. Obſerving that human authority is a precarious guide; that great names on one ſide, are counterbalanced by names equally great on the other; it nobly reſolves to enquire and judge for itſelf. The Bereans in the hiſtory of the Acts are commended for not taking the word even of an apoſtle, but examining the ſcriptures for themſelves

themſelves whether the doctrine which they heard was true, and whether St. Paul's reaſoning was juſt*. Ignorant people are confident of every thing: ſuperficial thinkers heſitate and doubt of almoſt every thing: but the man of calm, intrepid, perſevering enquiry, will ſee a clear evidence of ſome truths, and will embrace them with unreſerved confidence; but his confidence will not extend far. He knows where to doubt. And this circumſtance diſtinguiſhes the juſt aſſurance of knowledge, from the groundleſs hardihood of ignorance.

Secondly,—As we are under indiſpenſible obligation to promote the virtue and happineſs of others, it is our duty to avow all truth which appears to us to be of importance, to correct as far as lies in our power, popular and pernicious errors, and to accelerate the improvement of mankind in knowledge and goodneſs.

We muſt not be aſhamed of truth, however unpopular; we muſt not conceal it, whatever

* Acts xvii. 11.

whatever the profeſſion of it may coſt us; we muſt not decline any proper opportunity of inſtructing others, though we receive no thanks for our labours; though we are repreſented as the diſturbers of the publick peace, and as men who *turn the world upſide down*; though our conduct is imputed to the moſt unworthy motives; though we are loaded with unmerited reproach; and though our ſincere and diſintereſted attempts to ſerve the beſt intereſts of our fellow creatures are rewarded with injury and inſult. This is the treatment which all the fearleſs advocates for truth have met with in every paſt age, and muſt ſtill expect to find. Nor ought they to wonder nor to complain if they are required to taſte of that cup, of which their great maſter drank ſo deep. They *are not of the world even as he was not of the world.*

But it will be aſked—Is a man to trouble the world with every crude indigeſted opinion which comes into his mind? It is ſufficient to reply, that no perſon will ever take pains to publiſh what he himſelf does not think of ſome importance: and

and to the importance of a doctrine as well as to it's truth, the right of private judgement muſt be allowed to extend. And what harm can ariſe from the publication of a fooliſh opinion? if it be really fooliſh and frivolous it will probably meet with very few abettors, and will ſoon die away.

But are *pernicious* principles to be avowed and diſſeminated, and the peace of mankind and the good order of ſociety to be diſturbed by doctrines tending to *infidelity* and *immorality* *? I anſwer, that no man deems his own principles to be pernicious: and if he thinks them of ſufficient importance, he ought without heſitation to avow them. If they are really detrimental, they muſt be falſe, and eaſily overthrown. No material injury has ever yet reſulted from free diſcuſſion, nor from the publication of the moſt dangerous tenets. Some few half thinking minds

* See a maſterly diſcuſſion of this queſtion in a volume entitled—Tracts ethical, theological, and political; by Thomas Cooper, Eſq. Tract 3d. Introd. p. 169.

have been perverted to infidelity, ſome depraved hearts have been rivetted in vice. But in general, the arguments for infidelity and immorality have been ſo very feeble, and ſo eaſily confuted, that they have only ſerved to illuſtrate the triumph of truth and virtue. Revelation is under great obligations to the attacks of infidels. Had not aſſaults been made by powerful and artful adverſaries, the friends of chriſtianity would not have been ſufficiently ſenſible of the firmneſs of the ground upon which they ſtood, nor how impregnable the fortreſs which they were required to defend. Truth loves the light, and hath nothing to dread from open and fair diſcuſſion. All that truth needs to fear is a dead calm, a ſullen indifference, which damps the ſpirit of enquiry, which benumbs the intellectual faculties, and which, ſo far as it prevails, tends to perpetuate the empire of ignorance and error.

What infinite miſchiefs have reſulted from the ſuppreſſion of free enquiry, and from laying reſtraints upon opinions deemed

deemed pernicious, let the black records of perſecution, let the bloody tribunals of the Inquiſition declare; and let all her dark and chearleſs dungeons reverberate the melancholy tale. For what valuable truth hath not at its firſt promulgation been branded as pernicious, and judged worthy of penal reſtraint?

What obligations would mankind have been under to thoſe inquiſitive minds, who in ſucceſſive ages have diſcovered truth, if with a manly ſpirit they had exhibited it to public view; and had not with more prudence than fortitude, and with a greater regard to their own eaſe than to the general good, conformed to the faſhions of the times in which they have lived, concealed the truth they had found under ſtudied ambiguity of phraſe, and ſuffered their valuable diſcoveries to die with themſelves. How would they have cleared the ground for thoſe who after them are labouring in the ſame field of enquiry, and to what heighth of improvement might not the human ſpecies have now been raiſed!

Nor can we hope that mankind will be generally and thoroughly enlightened till the love of truth becomes paramount to every other conſideration, and men are willing to hazard every thing to promote its progreſs. Then may we hope that *ſatan ſhall fall as lightning from heaven* *, that all oppoſition to truth ſhall ſpeedily vaniſh, and that ſcience, freedom, virtue and happineſs, ſhall univerſally prevail.

But it is much to be feared that this period is far remote. The difficulties attending a public profeſſion of obnoxious principles even in theſe times of comparative light and moderation are ſo great, that it is not wonderful that few chuſe to expoſe themſelves to them. And pity rather than cenſure ſhould be extended to thoſe who having once made a fair profeſſion of truth, have unhappily ſhrunk under the keen and piercing blaſt of perſecution †.

How

* Luke x. 18.

† The ſynod of Ayr have given recent proof that the worſt part of the ſpirit of popery, *perſecution*, is not limited

How great then are our obligations to thoſe enlarged and generous minds, who have courageouſly led the way in the path of true honour; and who, in a frivolous and ſceptical age, have dared to aſſert the native dignity and freedom of the mind, and to ſet an heroic example of zeal for truth, and of oppoſition to eſtabliſhed and prevailing errors. And let it not be imputed to them as a reproach, that after the great example of their divine maſter, they have thought it their duty to *bear* a public *teſtimony to truth*, and are not unwilling to be *partakers of his ſufferings*, that they may hereafter be found worthy to *ſhare in his glorious triumph*.

And

limited to the members of the Romiſh communion. But let not too ſevere a cenſure fall upon the unhappy ſufferer, who, ſinking under the preſſure of infirmities and domeſtic woes, fainted in the day of trial, and intimidated by threats of deprivation and eccleſiaſtical cenſure, renounced thoſe principles, which in better days, as the reſult of calm enquiry he had honeſtly avowed. The moſt ignorant and unrelenting of his inquiſitors cannot wiſh him ſeverer torture than his own ſad feelings and reflexions upon the preſent unfortunate occaſion will neceſſarily create in a thought ful and ingenuous mind. Need I mention the name of Dr. M'Gill, the author of an excellent Treatiſe on the death of Chriſt.

And if that Inſtitution for which I this day appear as an advocate, and in which I have found a pleaſing and honourable aſylum, when the voice of duty and of honour made it neceſſary to abandon prior connexions, endeared by long cuſtom and early aſſociations, and of which a tender and grateful remembrance will ever remain; if this Inſtitution, the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of which is unlimited freedom of enquiry, and the great object of which is to advance the intereſts of truth and ſcience, of liberty and virtue, anſwer the ends for which it was originally founded; if by the wiſdom of its conſtitution, the prudence of its governours, the attention of its tutors, and by the ſtrict obſervance of its laws, it forms the young and ſuſceptible mind to the love of truth and ſcience, to a ſenſe of honour, to the practice of virtue, to comprehenſion of views, to dignity and ſublimity of character; if it ſupplies the community with patriots and philoſophers, with intelligent and virtuous citizens, with zealous and courageous advocates for truth and liberty, with patrons

of

of literature and benefactors to mankind; if theſe be the happy fruits of this liberal Seminary, it will deſerve and it will ſecure the applauſe and patronage of the diſcerning public. By its own merits let it ſtand or fall. And I flatter myſelf, that by the faithful unremitted attention and care, which it is the duty and the wiſh of all concerned, to pay to its advancing ſtate; to correct every imperfection, and to adopt every valuable improvement, this riſing Inſtitution ſhall burſt like the morning ſun through every miſt of prejudice, envy, and calumny; and ſhall diffuſe light, and truth, and virtue and happineſs, to generations yet unborn

THE END.

THE END.

The REPORT *of the* COMMITTEE *to the* GENERAL MEETING *of* GOVERNORS *and* SUBSCRIBERS *to the* NEW COLLEGE, HACKNEY, *in January*, 1790.

GENTLEMEN,

YOUR Committee are happy in the opportunity which this Annual Meeting affords them of congratulating you on the ſucceſs and proſperous State of the College at Hackney. The ſecond wing, which was begun, in conſequence of the Reſolution of the laſt Meeting, early in the Spring, is juſt finiſhed, and will be fit for uſe in a month or ſix weeks. Your Committee have been anxious for its completion, and have done every thing in their power to expedite it. The great acceſſion of Students at the commencement of this Seſſion required accommodations, which the number of Rooms in the Centre Houſe and other wing was not ſufficient to ſupply: And your Committee have been under a neceſſity of providing for ſome of the Students in a Lodging-houſe in the neighbourhood, and of placing them under the care and inſpection of one of the Aſſiſtant Tutors.

But this inconvenience will be removed as ſoon as the additional wing is fit to be occupied *. The number of Students is now Forty-nine, of whom Forty are upon their own foundation, and Nine upon the foundation of the Inſtitution. Thirty are deſigned for Civil Life and Nineteen for the Miniſtry.

The improvement of the Students affords a pleaſing proſpect of the utility of the Inſtitution, and of the ſervice which it is likely to render to the important intereſts of Knowledge, Liberty and Virtue.

The Tutors concur in expreſſing a degree of ſatisfaction with the conduct and literary proficiency of the Students in general, which is very encouraging to the friends of the College, and which cannot fail to ſecure for it increaſing patronage and ſupport.

The

* Since the above Report in January the wing has been finiſhed and is inhabited.

The ſuperintending Committee and Tutors have been anxious to pay every kind of attention to order and improvement, that can conduce to the reputation and proſperity of the Inſtitution. Your Committee beg leave to inform you, that the Rev. Mr Belſham has reſided in the College from the commencement of the Seſſion; and that Meſſrs. Broadhurſt and Jones, late Students, but appointed to be aſſiſtant Tutors, have officiated from that time in their reſpective departments.

They are happy in expreſſing their opinion, that the Inſtitution is now provided with ample means of Inſtruction and domeſtic Diſcipline.

The Treaſurers report, that at Michaelmas, to which period the Accounts of the College were made up, there remained in their hands the ſum of £72. 2s. 8d.

The building and furniture have been attended with a very conſiderable expence; and your Committee have already been under the neceſſity of incurring a large debt: which, together with the additions that muſt yet be made to it, will amount in the whole to about Six thouſand two hundred pounds, at an intereſt of Four and one half per Cent.

Confiding in the zeal and liberality of the friends of Science, Liberty and Religion, they have proceeded to the execution of their plan; and though much remains to be done for augmenting the Library, improving the Apparatus, and in other ways, they have no doubt of completing the object that has been undertaken, and rendering it as reſpectable and uſeful as its friends can wiſh. But for this purpoſe they are under the neceſſity of renewing their application, both for farther Donations and annual Subſcriptions. They wiſh to diſcharge the Inſtitution as ſoon as poſſible from the debt with which it is incumbered; and to apply the ſavings that may accrue from the Income of the College to various Literary purpoſes, ſubſervient to its increaſing utility and credit. The demand upon the College for the education of miniſters is likely to increaſe. It is therefore hoped, that the Friends of Religion and of the cauſe of Diſſent will enable the Committee to pay due attention to caſes of this kind that may ariſe.

May

May we not reaſonably hope, Gentlemen, that the Inſtitution to which we extend our patronage and ſupport, and on behalf of which we ſolicit the generous attention of the Public, will concur with other events, which none of us can diſregard, in diſſeminating thoſe principles of civil and religious Liberty, that muſt neceſſarily conduce to the general improvement of ſociety and of mankind? May we not preſume that the cauſe of Religion and Chriſtianity will be effectually ſerved, by the proviſion which you and others alike diſpoſed have made for connecting education and diſcipline, and for promoting liberal ſentiments and rectitude of conduct?

From the time in which we firſt engaged in this undertaking, the proſpect has been gradually improving.

The review of what has been already done muſt afford us pleaſure, and our juſt expectations muſt encourage our perſeverance.

To you, in your ſeveral connections, and in your occaſional intercourſe with the liberal and well-diſpoſed, we beg leave to recommend the preſent circumſtances of the College, not doubting your readineſs to embrace every opportunity that occurs for engaging an acceſſion of ſupport; and confident that every effort of your benevolence and public ſpirit directed to this object will be recompenſed by its permanent and increaſing ſucceſs.

P. S. It is found neceſſary, and has been determined to build a Dining-room and Library; and the Committee hope that the friends of the Inſtitution will enable them to complete this part of their Plan as ſpeedily as poſſible.

June 24th, 1790.

HACKNEY, June 24th, 1790.

NEW COLLEGE.

THE Committee for conducting the NEW COLLEGE among PROTESTANT DISSENTERS inform the Public, that the next Seſſion commences on the 3d Thurſday in September, and will cloſe on the laſt Thurſday in June. The ſucceſs of this Inſtitution, during the ſhort period that has elapſed ſince its firſt eſtabliſhment, has been very encouraging. Of the eligible ſituation of the College, and of the local conveniences and advantages that recommend it, nothing need now be ſaid. The Committee and Tutors think it ſufficient to aſſure the Public, that they will aſſiduouſly avail themſelves of every circumſtance that may be conducive to the health, moral conduct, and literary improvement of the young Gentlemen, who ſhall be intruſted to their care. They alſo add, that it is a fundamental principle of this Inſtitution, that it be open to perſons of every religious denomination, who will be encouraged in forming their ſentiments on all controverſial ſubjects without ſubſcription or any other reſtriction or impoſition.

The courſe of Education will be comprehenſive and liberal, and adapted to youth in general, whether they are intended for civil or commercial life, or for any of the learned profeſſions.

The lectures commence immediately at the opening of the Seſſion, and are regularly purſued every day in the week, except Sunday, under the direction of the following

following gentlemen: viz. Rev. Andrew Kippis, D.D. F.R.S. and S.A; Rev. Abraham Rees, D.D. F.R.S. Rev. Thomas Belſham; Rev. Gilbert Wakefield, B.A. and late Fellow of Jeſus College, Cambridge; Rev. John Kiddle; Rev. Thomas Broadhurſt; Rev. David Jones.

The uſual courſe for young Gentlemen, not intended for the miniſtry, will be completed in three years; and will include the Latin and Greek (and if deſired, the Hebrew and other oriental) Languages, Greek and Roman Antiquities, Ancient and Modern Geography, Univerſal Grammar, Rhetoric and Criticiſm, Chronology, Hiſtory, the Principles of Law and Government, the ſeveral branches of Mathematics, Aſtronomy, Natural and Experimental Philoſophy, the Elements of Chemiſtry, Logic, Ethics, and the Evidences of Religion, natural and revealed. Young Gentlemen, who ſhall prolong their ſtay in College beyond the Term of Three years, will have an opportunity of proſecuting thoſe branches of Science to which they moſt incline, and which may be beſt adapted to their future proſpects. The Committee and Tutors cannot forbear expreſſing their wiſhes and hopes, that this will be the caſe with reſpect to many, who are committed to their care.

The courſe for young Gentlemen, intended for the Miniſtry, will extend (at leaſt) to five years; and will comprehend, beſides the objects above enumerated, Hebrew, Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, Theology, Jewiſh Antiquities, and the Study of the Scriptures.

The Commons are provided by the Committee: and the Students are under the more immediate direction and government of Dr. REES, who reſides in a houſe near the College, and of Mr. BELSHAM and Mr. KIDDLE, who live in the College with the Students.

The

The Terms for each Seſſion are ſixty guineas, which will include ſeparate Apartments, Board and Education. Each Student is alſo expected to contribute three guineas to the Library at the Time of his admiſſion. Students on the foundation will be provided for in theſe reſpects without expence: and the Committee will encourage young perſons intended for the Miniſtry, whoſe friends are willing to defray the charges of their board and Education, by a conſiderable abatement in the above terms.

It is ſcarcely neceſſary to obſerve, that the ſituation of this Inſtitution affords opportunity of obtaining the beſt means of inſtruction in French and the other Modern Languages, Drawing, &c. at a ſeparate expence.

No Divinity-Students will be admitted under the age of ſixteen years, nor any Lay-Student above the age of eighteen years, nor under the age of fifteen years, except under circumſtances, which in the opinion of the Committee, ſhall warrant a departure from this rule, ſo far as it limits the higheſt age of admiſſion to eighteen: and it is expected, that all ſtudents be well recommended both as to conduct and qualifications.

The Committee beg leave to inform the friends of thoſe young Gentlemen who may be deſigned for this Inſtitution, that as the choice of rooms will depend on priority of application, thoſe who give to either of the Treaſurers or of the Tutors the moſt early poſitive declaration of their intention to be at the College on the third Thurſday in September, will be entered in the Books according to the order of their application: but this priority muſt neceſſarily be confined to thoſe who are preſent at ten in the morning on the day above ſpecified. They cannot help wiſhing, for very obvious reaſons, that young Gentlemen may be ready for admiſſion at the Commencement of each Seſſion, and to have timely notice of the intention

intention of their friends; but they are at the ſame time well apprized that ſome peculiar circumſtances may render it deſirable to procure admiſſion after the commencement of a Seſſion. When ſuch circumſtances occur, they will be always diſpoſed to accommodate thoſe who apply; and the Tutors will take care to fill up their time with advantage.

Application for the Admiſſion of Students may be made to

THOMAS ROGERS, Eſq; Cornhill,
MAT. TOWGOOD, Eſq; Clement's-lane,
MICH. DODSON, Eſq; Boſwell-court,
Or to either of the Tutors.

} *Treaſurers:* Who will receive Subſcriptions for this Inſtitution.

*** It is requeſted that all Legacies intended for the uſe of the Inſtitution, be bequeated according to the following form. "I give, and bequeath to A. B. and C. D. the Sum of upon truſt, and to the intent that they, or one of them, pay the ſame to the Treaſurers for the time being, or one of them, of the ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION among PROTESTANT DISSENTERS, founded in the year 1786, now eſtabliſhed in the Pariſh of Hackney, in the County of Middleſex, and deſire and direct that the ſaid ſum of ſhall be paid out of my Perſonal Eſtate, and applied towards carrying on the laudable deſigns of the ſaid Inſtitution."

N. B. Books, Philoſophical Inſtruments, or any other Specific Legacies, may be bequeathed in any words which the Teſtators may think fit to uſe.